

Finding of No Significant Impact
Redwood Maintenance Facility Relocation
Redwood National and State Parks
Del Norte County, California
December 2005

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) should be attached to the *Redwood Maintenance Facility Relocation Environmental Assessment and Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration* (EA/IS/MND), dated December 2004. This FONSI together with the EA/IS/MND, the revised IS/MND (revised IS/MND) prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation that was recirculated in June 2005, and the Errata constitute a complete record of the conservation planning and environmental impact analysis process for this proposal.

This project is being conducted in partnership with the California State Parks, Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) under a Cooperative Management Agreement between the National Park Service (NPS) and CDPR for Cooperative Management of Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP).

The selected action has two parts: construction of a new joint NPS/CDPR maintenance facility at Aubell Ranch near Crescent City, followed by removal of the existing NPS maintenance facility at Requa and restoration of the site. The NPS will implement as its selected action for restoration of the Requa site the proposed action described in Alternative 2 in the EA/IS/MND and as its selected action for the location of the new facility, construction at the Midway site on Aubell Ranch described in Alternative 3 in the EA/IS/MND.

The planning process conducted by each agency under its respective environmental planning regulations (federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)) is similar but the steps are not identical. NPS planning has been conducted consistent with federal regulations and NPS guidelines and policies for compliance with NEPA. CDPR has completed its planning for construction of the joint facility under the requirements of the CEQA that apply to projects conducted by a state agency. The CDPR decision is described in a separate Notice of Determination (NOD) which is equivalent to this FONSI. Because this project is being conducted jointly by the two agencies, planning decisions and public involvement related to the new facility at Aubell apply to both agencies. However, the actions taken by the NPS at Requa are the sole responsibility of the NPS because Requa is located entirely on federal lands.

Purpose and Need for Redwood Maintenance Facility Relocation

The purpose of this action is to provide a joint facility designed to accommodate both NPS and CDPR maintenance operations at RNSP and to increase efficiency and reduce costs of these operations.

The current NPS maintenance operations at Requa are housed in buildings that were constructed in the 1950s as a military installation and are not well suited for maintenance operations throughout RNSP. The buildings are too small and maintenance costs are excessive due to their age and condition. The site overlooks the Pacific Ocean from the top of a seismically active and geologically unstable bluff, which results in slumping and sliding of the ground surface. The slumping and sliding damages the buildings, the roads, and the underground utilities creating a potential safety hazard for employees and further increasing the maintenance costs. Some utilities, especially the water treatment system, no longer meet state health and safety or water quality standards and must be upgraded for continued use. Requa Road, the County access road

from U.S. Highway 101 to the site used by commercial delivery trucks and large park maintenance equipment, is narrow and winding, is located on a hillside that is subject to slope failure, crosses a low area that is occasionally flooded during winter storms, and is shared with residential and recreational users. Heavy equipment needed to maintain park roads is stored at the Requa site. During periods of flooding or if Requa Road is damaged or impassable due to slides, the maintenance equipment must be moved from the maintenance area to ensure it is available in the parks. Road failures on Requa Road and on Highway 101 between Requa and Crescent City where most maintenance employees reside make it difficult for maintenance employees to reach their duty station and present a potential safety hazard, particularly during intense winter storms common in the region.

CDPR needs a maintenance facility to replace one formerly located at Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park that was destroyed in a fire. Current CDPR maintenance operations are larger than what the original facility was designed to accommodate.

Redwood National Park and the three state parks within the national park boundary (Jedediah Smith Redwoods, Del Norte Coast Redwoods, and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Parks) are now jointly managed as RNSP for operational efficiencies and to provide better protection of resources and service to visitors. This joint operation has been hampered by duplicate facilities that result in higher costs and that impede communication between agency management and field staff.

A joint facility is needed that is designed to accommodate the current level of maintenance operations for the NPS and CDPR and to promote communication between the two agencies regarding those operations, that meets current health and safety standards, that reduces the operational costs for the facility itself and meets sustainability guidelines for reduced water and energy use, and that is reliably accessible to commercial and park vehicles from major roads in the region.

After a new facility is constructed, portions of the existing NPS facility at Requa need to be demolished for health and safety reasons related to the age and condition of the structures and continuing deterioration due to geological instability of the site. After demolition, portions of the site need to be restored to more natural conditions.

Selected Action

The December 2004 EA/IS/MND described three alternatives

- Alternative 1: No Action;
- Alternative 2: Requa Restoration/Elk Valley Road Site (Preferred Project); and
- Alternative 3: Requa Partial Restoration/Midway Site.

The two action alternatives address the two components of the project: the disposition of the existing maintenance facilities at Requa and the degree of restoration that will occur at Requa after the new facility at Aubell Ranch is completed, and the location on the Aubell Ranch property where the new maintenance facility will be constructed.

The December 2004 EA/IS/MND identified Alternative 2: Requa Restoration/Elk Valley Road Site as the preferred project.

There are no changes in actions, mitigations, or other key elements of the proposed action described in the EA/IS/MND (Alternative 2: Requa Restoration) for the restoration of the Requa site following construction of the new facility. The errata sheet clarifies one of the statements

that appeared in the EA/IS/MND regarding the purpose of and need for restoration of natural resources in areas from which facilities are removed.

Public comment on the proposal resulted in a change to the preferred project for the location of the new facility from Alternative 2 (Elk Valley Road Site) in the EA/IS/MND to Alternative 3 (Midway Site). The details of the final selected action are summarized below.

Under the selected action, the NPS and CDPR will construct a new maintenance facility on a 10-acre site identified in the December 2004 EA/IS/MND as Alternative 3: Midway Site. The location and design of the new maintenance facility, and associated roads and utilities, at the Midway site will be as described in the EA/IS/MND.

The new facility will house a variety of work, shop, storage, and office functions in approximately 30,000 square feet of building area, including a 4,000-square-foot open-sided covered equipment storage building. The maintenance facility will have about 204,000 square feet (about 4.6 acres) of developed area, including about 75,000 square feet of paved lots and yard; 38,000 square feet of gravel lots; 44,000 square feet of unpaved outdoor storage yard; 15,000 square feet of landscaping and screen planting; 2,000 square feet of sidewalks; and the approximately 30,000 square feet of buildings mentioned above. Another 150,000 square feet (about 3.4 acres) of road shoulders, drainage swales, leach field sites, and other disturbed ground at Aubell will be replanted in grass following construction. About 10,000 cubic yards of earth will be graded to develop level building pads and parking lots and create appropriate drainage patterns.

The intersection of Aubell Lane and Elk Valley Road will be slightly widened and left turn lanes added to improve safety for vehicle s turning onto Aubell Lane. The facility is expected to generate an additional 75 vehicle trips daily on Elk Valley Road. The existing overhead power line along Aubell Lane will be modified to bring commercial three-phase power to the Midway site from the overhead line along Elk Valley Road. About 1,800 feet of Aubell Lane will be widened to two lanes to accommodate heavy equipment that will be stored at the facility and delivery trucks and paved to reduce dust. Approximately 100 parking spaces for employees and park vehicles and equipment will be provided. Where Aubell Lane crosses an unnamed intermittent tributary of Elk Creek, the existing undersized culvert will be replaced with a concrete bottomless arch culvert large enough to accommodate a 100-year streamflow event and to allow passage for fish under all flow conditions.

There is a change from the description that appeared in the EA/IS/MND for the water source for the new facility. Rather than connecting to the Bertsch-Ocean View Community Services District (BOVCSD) water supply via a 10-inch water pipe installed along approximately 2,400 feet of Elk Valley Road, and thence via a 6-inch pipe extending for 1,800 feet along Aubell Lane, water will be obtained from the City of Crescent City or the BOVCSD via a pipeline across the Elk Valley Rancheria's Stary Ranch property adjacent to the Aubell property on the east. The NPS and CDPR will complete any further planning and design, cultural and/or natural resource compliance, and obtain any permits necessary to connect to the line at the boundary of the Aubell and Elk Valley Rancheria properties. The water source will serve only RNSP facilities and will not be available for any additional private residential development, and therefore, will not induce or facilitate population growth in the vicinity.

The facility will be set back 125 feet from the Elk Creek tributary and is designed to minimize water and energy use. The daily water requirement for the new facility is estimated to be up to 2,000 gallons per day (gpd) for building uses and minor hand-watering until new landscaping plants become established, and is expected to generate about 1,400 gpd of wastewater. The fire

flow requirements for the sprinkler system for the new facility will be approximately 1,500 gallons per minute for two hours (180,000 gallons) with 20 pounds per square inch residual pressure at the hydrant. Wastewater will be treated and disposed on-site via a septic and leach system, with the leach field located about 300 feet west of the unnamed tributary of Elk Creek.

The Redwood National Park boundary is being adjusted to include 69.9 acres originally purchased in 1991 by CDPR, which has been managed since that time as part of Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. After the boundary adjustment is completed, CDPR will transfer 17 acres (the Midway site) on which the new facility will be constructed and sufficient interest for road and utility rights-of-way to the NPS.

At the existing Requa maintenance area, the selected action is the same as that described in the December 2004 EA/IS/MND. Buildings will be surveyed for hazardous materials prior to removal. Hazardous materials such as lead paint and asbestos will be removed and disposed in an approved disposal site in accordance with federal and state regulations. Buildings will be demolished to their foundations just below ground level. Building materials will be recycled to the greatest extent practicable, and all non-recyclable materials and debris will be disposed in accordance with regulations as cited above.

The NPS will remove overhead electrical lines and poles, many of the retaining walls, and interior and exterior fencing with the exception of the fencing for the main entrance gate, which will remain to prevent unauthorized vehicle entry. Above-ground drainage structures such as culverts, concrete ditches, and drop inlets will be removed and manholes will be filled with clean gravel and abandoned in place.

Most of the paved roads will be removed, except those that provide access to two telecommunication sites, which will remain in their current locations.

The sewage treatment plant will be removed, and all septic tanks will be decommissioned and filled with clean gravel. The NPS will remove two 75,000-gallon water storage tanks and salvage them for use elsewhere in the parks or will dispose of them as surplus property.

The NPS will grade and recontour about four acres from which structures are removed to resemble the original topography to the greatest extent possible. No fill will be imported. Non-native invasive plants will be removed, and all graded areas will be revegetated with native plants and seeds obtained on-site or from local sources.

The NPS purchased a water easement at Requa in 1991. The water system supplies five private residences in addition to the maintenance area. The water system that serves the federal facilities will be dismantled but the NPS will allow the private users to purchase the water system, convert it for their uses, and assume operation and maintenance responsibilities.

Other Alternatives Considered in the Environmental Assessment

Under the No Action alternative (Alternative 1), the NPS would continue to use the Requa maintenance facility. The structures would continue to deteriorate from age and through damage caused by the geological instability of the site, and the maintenance costs would be expected to rise proportionately. The sewage treatment plant would require replacement to meet current California health and environmental regulations. Access to the Requa facility would continue be difficult or hazardous during severe weather or if either Requa Road or Highway 101 between Crescent City and Requa are closed by landslides or flooding.

The state park maintenance staff would continue to share the small central operations area in a converted residence at Aubell Ranch with the ranger staff. Communication and coordination between NPS and CDPR maintenance personnel would be hampered by maintenance operations conducted out of different offices.

Under Alternative 2: Elk Valley Road Site, the new facility would be constructed on nine acres adjacent to Elk Valley Road, set back 100 feet from the unnamed tributary of Elk Creek. Approximately 500 feet of Aubell Lane would be widened to two lanes. The buildings, utilities, and site development would affect approximately the same footprint as under the selected action. The Elk Valley Road site is screened by existing vegetation from the nearest residence but would be more visible from Elk Valley Road and would have a greater effect on the character of the area when viewed from the road.

Under Alternative 3: Requa Partial Restoration, the existing structures would be demolished as under the selected action but the buildings foundations, all the paved roads, and the drainage structures would be left in place. The facility would continue to be gated to prevent unauthorized vehicle access. As under the selected action, the telecommunication sites would remain, the sewage plant would be removed, septic tanks would be decommissioned, and the two 75,000 gallon water tanks would be removed and salvaged. There would be no recontouring of the ground surface because the building foundations, pavement, and drainage structures would remain. Because there would be minimal grading, there would be no removal of non-native plants and revegetation with native plants, rather than restoration of four acres of native plants as under the selected action. Increased levels of erosion control and slope stabilization would be needed to prevent the building foundations, roads, and retaining walls from slumping and sliding due to the geological instability of the site. The water system to federal facilities would be dismantled but the private landowners served by the system would have the opportunity to purchase, operate and maintain it for their uses.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The environmentally preferred alternative is the action that best promotes the environmental policies outlined in the NEPA statute. These policies include fulfilling the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; attaining the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation or risk to health or safety; and preserving important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage.

The EA/IS/MND identified Alternative 2: Requa Restoration/Elk Valley Road Site as the environmentally preferred alternative. The environmentally preferred alternative for the Requa site is the selected action, which was Alternative 2 in the EA/IS/MND.

Both the Requa maintenance area and the Midway site at Aubell are highly disturbed from construction of the original military installation and agricultural use, respectively, and do not possess significant intact natural or cultural resources with the exception of the small creek at Aubell in which coho salmon occur. Coho salmon are federally listed as a threatened species and State-listed as endangered. Alterations to Elk Creek downstream of the Aubell project and to the intermittent unnamed tributary of Elk Creek from residential, agricultural, and commercial development, and particularly from the culverts through which the creek passes beneath Aubell Lane and Elk Valley Road, have diminished the original stream functions and values, and reduced the quality of the stream as habitat for anadromous fish such as coho salmon and coastal cutthroat trout.

Construction of the new facility at the Elk Valley Road site would have resulted in fewer short-term environmental effects to water quality and riparian wetlands because the Elk Valley Road site would not require disturbance to the Elk Creek tributary for widening Aubell Lane to the Midway site and from replacement of the culvert on the widened Aubell Lane across the tributary. The Elk Valley Road site would require widening 500 linear feet of Aubell Lane but would not affect the tributary. When the environmentally preferred alternative was identified for the December 2004 EA/IS/MND, no sensitive fish species were known to occupy the Elk Creek tributary upstream of Elk Valley Road. In January 2005, salmonids were observed in the tributary upstream of Elk Valley Road but the species was not identified. In February 2005, additional surveys confirmed the presence of coho salmon in the tributary.

The selected action for the location of the new facility at Aubell (Alternative 3: Midway Site) is the environmentally preferred alternative for the location of the new facility. The Midway site will provide greater long-term benefits to coho salmon because the existing undersized metal pipe culvert through which the tributary currently passes will be replaced with a concrete bottomless arch culvert sized that will last longer and will accommodate a 100-year storm event, which will improve stream functioning and allow unrestricted passage for all life stages of anadromous fish. A total of 120 linear feet of riparian zone, 60 linear feet of which is already affected by the existing road and culvert, will be disturbed to construct the new 90-foot-long culvert. Adverse effects on water quality and coho salmon from removal of the old culvert, construction of the arch culvert, and soil disturbance associated with road widening and general construction will be avoided by maintaining the 125-foot setback from the creek for all portions of the facility with the exception of the road, conducting all work during periods of low flow on the tributary, and by use of best management practices for minimizing soil erosion and runoff and other practices listed in the Terms and Conditions in the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Biological Opinion 151422SWR2003AR8948:BAD, dated October 27, 2005. Over the long-term, the new arch culvert will improve the function of the stream, its floodplain and associated riparian zone, and the quality of fish habitat. Thus, the selected action for construction at the Midway site is the environmentally preferred alternative because it offers the greatest long-term protection for coho salmon, riparian wetlands, and stream hydrology.

Together, the restoration of Requa as described in Alternative 2 in the EA/IS/MND and construction of the new maintenance facility at the Midway site as described in Alternative 3 constitute the environmentally preferred alternative because they provide the greatest long-term protection to significant park resources, including the unnamed intermittent tributary of Elk Creek, the associated riparian wetlands, and the coho salmon that occupy the stream. Further, replacement of the Requa facility with the new facility would reduce overall water and energy use because the new structure would feature current sustainable technology to increase the efficiency of energy and water used and reduce overall consumption.

The No Action alternative (Alternative 1) is not the environmentally preferred alternative because there would be no removal of structures at Requa including those that contain lead paint and asbestos, no restoration of more natural topography and restoration of native vegetation on areas currently covered by asphalt and concrete, and no removal of invasive non-native plants. Under the No Action alternative, the Elk Creek tributary would continue to run through an undersized metal pipe culvert beneath Aubell Lane that does not accommodate very high flows and impedes passage for coho salmon and other anadromous salmonids at very low flows. The existing culvert would eventually plug or rust through and fail, and the stream, riparian wetlands, and fish would be affected by disturbance for removal and replacement.

There would be less extensive restoration of the Requa site under Alternative 3. Because there would be minimal grading to restore topography affected by roads, drainage structures, and concrete retaining walls, there would be no removal of non-native plants or revegetation with native plants, rather than four acres of revegetation that would occur under the selected action.

Public Involvement

The NPS studied relocation of the Requa maintenance facility because of geological hazards at the site and resultant employee safety risks and high maintenance costs as early as 1990. Relocation was proposed in the 2000 GMP/GP EIS/R. The GMP/GP stated that any new facility would be a joint NPS/CDPR facility and the new site required safe, dependable access to local highways and convenient access to RNSP facilities. The GMP/GP also stated that the primary CDPR maintenance facility would remain at Aubell Ranch. The Aubell area is identified as a developed zone in the management zoning section of the GMP. Administrative facilities including maintenance shops, offices, and storage areas are considered appropriate in developed zones.

On April 15, 2003, park managers met at Crescent City headquarters with the Crescent City city manager, the director of the Del Norte County Community Development Department, and Elk Valley Rancheria managers to discuss the feasibility of locating the new facility at Aubell Ranch. Water supply, sewage treatment, traffic, and biological and cultural resources were identified as possible planning issues. On May 29, 2003, park managers and NPS planners met with the City Manager and Elk Valley Rancheria managers to discuss potential sites in relation to sewage treatment and traffic. The NPS met with Yurok Tribe representatives the same day to discuss the disposition of the Requa facilities following construction of the new maintenance area..

NPS and CDPR issued a news release in May 2003 announcing an open house to discuss the project. The Crescent City *Daily Triplicate*, the newspaper of record for Del Norte County, published a short article on May 28, 2005 that an open house meeting would be held on May 29 to discuss “a major future project” for development of a new park maintenance facility. The article stated, “preliminary agency assessments identified Aubell Ranch as a suitable site, but suggestions from the public for alternative sites are encouraged.” Three persons attended the meeting in Crescent City but did not comment on the site for the new facility, express concerns about the project, or raise any planning issues.

The EA/IS/MND was made available for public review and comment on December 1, 2005 for a 44-day period ending January 13, 2005. Fifty-eight copies of the EA/IS/MND were distributed via U.S. Mail and express courier to elected officials; federal, state and local agencies; federally recognized American Indian tribes; organizations; local businesses; residents of the Aubell and Elk Valley Road area; Requa residents who obtain water from the NPS water system; and the general public. Fifteen copies were distributed to the California State Clearinghouse Office of Planning and Research, which circulates proposals among state agencies for review. Copies of the document were also available at local libraries in Crescent City, Arcata, and Eureka, at park offices in Crescent City and Eureka, and on the Internet.

The NPS and CDPR issued a press release on December 6, 2004 announcing the availability of the EA/IS/MND for public comment. On December 15, the *Daily Triplicate* published a front-page article outlining the proposal and providing information on how to comment. CDPR published a legal notice in the *Daily Triplicate* on Saturday, December 18, 2004 describing the proposal, public involvement opportunities, availability of the document, and how to comment.

The NPS met on December 6, 2004 with five Requa property owners who obtain water from the NPS system and distributed copies of the EA/IS/MND. On January 4, 2005, the NPS and CDPR met with Requa area stakeholders, Crescent City and Elk Valley Rancheria representatives, and local residents from the Elk Valley Road area. As a result of issues raised at these meetings and a request from the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, the NPS and CDPR extended the comment period for the EA/IS/MND to January 28, 2005.

During the comment period, the NPS and CDPR received fifteen letters (including three letters regarding cultural resource consultations), four electronic mail messages, and four phone calls regarding the project. Neighbors expressed concerns about the effect on nearby residences from traffic, noise, wildlife, visual quality, and the rural character of the neighborhood from locating the maintenance facility at the Elk Valley Road site. The U.S. Army Corps sent a letter after the close of the comment period regarding the possible need for a permit under the Clean Water Act.

In response to concerns expressed at the January 4, 2005 meeting and in written comments received by the close of the comment period, the NPS and CDPR scheduled follow up meetings with Del Norte County staff and the Board of Supervisors. On Saturday, January 22, the *Daily Triplicate* printed an article outlining the agenda for the regularly scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting on January 25, including discussion of the proposed maintenance facility.

RNSP managers held a public meeting at the Elk Valley Rancheria headquarters attended by about 20 people on February 24, 2005 to discuss the project. In response to public comment about impacts to the neighborhood mentioned above, NPS and CDPR changed the preferred alternative for the location of the new facility from the Elk Valley Road site to the Midway site, which is set back from Elk Valley Road and is screened by trees from the road and the nearest residence. The Midway site was analyzed in the environmental assessment, but was not analyzed as the preferred project in the State portion of the environmental document (the initial study/mitigated negative declaration.) This change did not alter the NPS conclusions nor introduce new factors not previously considered by the NPS.

Due to the change in the proposed project, CDPR recirculated the Redwood Maintenance Facility Relocation Revised Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (revised IS/MND) pursuant to the requirements of the CEQA for a period of 49 days from June 20, 2005 through July 29, 2005. Sixty-eight copies of the revised IS/MND were distributed to the recipients of the original EA/IS/MND as well as to additional elected officials and persons who had commented on the original document or who had attended the public meetings. Copies of the document were also made available at local libraries in Crescent City, Arcata, and Eureka, at park offices in Crescent City and Eureka, and on the Internet. The CDPR published a legal notice in the *Daily Triplicate* on Saturday, June 25 advising that the revised IS/MND was available for review. The *Daily Triplicate* published a front page article on Saturday, July 9 describing the project and announcing the public meeting scheduled for July 11, 2005. A second article appeared on the *Daily Triplicate* website describing the meeting, which was attended by eleven people. Six written comments were received on the revised IS/MND, one of which was submitted at the meeting.

Endangered Species Consultations

The NPS met with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on October 28, 2003 to initiate informal consultation under Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, for the purpose of determining whether any federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered, or candidate, plants or animals would be affected by this project.

The portion of the project that involves restoration of the Requa site will have no effects on federally or state listed, proposed, or candidate rare, threatened, or endangered plants or animals.

No federally or state rare, listed, proposed or candidate threatened or endangered plant or animal species were found during the original surveys of the Elk Valley and Midway sites at Aubell Ranch.

As a result of informal consultation, the NPS determined, and the USFWS concurred, that neither the Requa nor the Aubell portions of the project have the potential to affect any listed, proposed or candidate threatened or endangered plants or terrestrial animals, and that further consultation with the USFWS under the Endangered Species Act was not required unless future surveys indicate the presence of listed species not observed during initial surveys.

Following the close of the comment period for the December 2004 EA/IS/MND, salmonids were observed but not identified to species in January 2005 in the unnamed tributary of Elk Creek upstream of the Elk Valley Road stream crossing and downstream of the Midway site. A carcass of a coho salmon was discovered during a subsequent survey on February 3, 2005. The tributary is immediately adjacent to the Midway site (the selected alternative) and is crossed by Aubell Lane. The Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) coho salmon that occur in the project area are federally listed as threatened. Coho salmon occupying streams between Punta Gorda and the Oregon border are also listed as threatened by the State of California. The stream is federally designated as critical habitat.

The NPS submitted a biological assessment to NMFS on June 22, 2005 that described the project, potential effects of the project on coho salmon, and mitigation to avoid or reduce any adverse effects on coho salmon or coho salmon critical habitat. NMFS issued Biological Opinion 151422SWR2003AR8948:BAD, dated October 27, 2005, that documented its determination that the project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened SONCC coho salmon or result in the destruction or adverse modification of SONCC coho salmon critical habitat.

Cultural Resource Consultations

On October 24, 2003, the NPS initiated government-to-government consultations on the plan with the Big Lagoon Rancheria, Elk Valley Rancheria, Hoopa Valley Tribe, Resighini Rancheria, Smith River Rancheria, Tolowa Nation, Trinidad Rancheria, and the Yurok Tribe via a letter informing each group of the proposed project and requesting information about cultural resources that might be affected by the proposal. The Yurok Tribe and the Elk Valley Rancheria provided written comments on the plan.

The NPS consulted on the plan with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Yurok Tribe Historic Preservation Officer (YTHPO) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (35 CFR 800) and under the 1995 Programmatic Agreement Among the NPS, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, Section V (1995 PA).

The YTHPO concurred on November 28, 2004 with the NPS finding that the Klamath Air Force Station (now the site of the Requa maintenance facility) is ineligible for listing in the National Register; that the only historic property found eligible for the National Register is the Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) as identified in the Cultural Resources Study, and that the proposed rehabilitation work at Requa (the selected action) will have no adverse effect on the TCP.

The SHPO concurred in a letter dated December 28, 2004 with the NPS determination that no historic properties will be affected by implementation of the selected action at Aubell. As elements of the selected action that have the potential to affect historic properties are scheduled for implementation, additional documentation will be submitted to the SHPO as required.

The Elk Valley Rancheria Tribal Chairman stated in a letter dated January 6, 2005 that construction of a new maintenance facility on the Midway site would not be an impediment to Rancheria lands adjacent to the site. The Rancheria requested that cultural monitors be present during any excavation and that the Tribe be consulted if any cultural materials were discovered. Monitoring during ground disturbance is standard NPS cultural resource mitigation and will be implemented for this project.

California Coastal Zone

The California Coastal Commission staff concurred on December 13, 2004 (ND-092-04) with the NPS determination that the demolition of facilities and subsequent restoration of the existing Requa maintenance facility would have no effect on the Coastal Zone. The Aubell site is not within the Coastal Zone.

Why This Project Will Not Have a Significant Effect on the Environment

This section summarizes effects on resources in the context of the Aubell area, the local community, and the parks as a whole, and documents that none of these effects is significant, highly controversial or uncertain, nor will the selected action adversely affect public health and safety. Further, the selected action is not part of a larger action and will not establish a precedent for future actions. The EA contains descriptions of the mitigation and best management practices to protect resources including water quality, riparian wetlands, and threatened fish species at the Aubell project area that are known to be present and might be affected by the project. Additional descriptions of mitigation measures to protect federally-listed threatened fish species that occur in the unnamed tributary of Elk Creek are contained in the Terms and Conditions portion of the NMFS Biological Opinion 151422SWR2003AR8948:BAD, dated October 27, 2005. Potential effects to other resources are also discussed but have been determined to be negligible or minor and will not require mitigation on the part of the NPS or CDPR to avoid or reduce the effects that are specific to this project.

Air Quality—Decommissioning and restoration work at Requa and construction at the Midway site at Aubell Ranch will have negligible, short-term adverse effects on air quality from vehicle emissions and fugitive dust from exposed soils. Dust suppression equipment and clean water will be used to reduce excess airborne particulates from exposed soils in active construction areas. There will be a negligible long-term benefit to air quality at Requa after park vehicles are no longer present on a regular basis and a corresponding negligible long-term adverse effect at the Aubell area when vehicles begin to operate there on a regular basis.

Cumulative Effects on Air Quality— Air quality in the parks and the region will continue to be very good to excellent over the long-term. The only potentially significant source of air pollution is from wildfires, which could have significant adverse effects on air quality for the duration of a fire. Potential effects on air quality from planned fire ignitions are negligible to moderate. The North Coast Air Quality Management District coordinates planned ignitions in Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity Counties to minimize cumulative adverse smoke effects on sensitive areas (local communities and highways). The cumulative effect on air quality in the parks from prescribed fires conducted on adjacent private timber lands to reduce logging slash will be short-term, adverse, localized and could range from negligible to moderate depending on wind conditions and how close the prescribed fires are to park boundaries.

Effects on Geology, Geological Hazards, and Soils—Decommissioning and/or removal of buildings and drainage structures at Requa and subsequent restoration will not increase geological hazards or affect significant geological resources. Building foundations and remaining roads located on unstable slopes will continue to slide due to geological processes but removal of impervious surfaces such as asphalt and concrete on four acres, regrading to resemble original ground contours, and revegetation will minimize instability related to soil saturation and runoff, and reduce surface erosion. At the Midway site, there would be no effects on geological resources and there are no known significant geological hazards. Approximately eight acres of soils would be affected for construction, with 4.6 acres affected in the long-term by the building footprint, roads, and parking areas, and 3.4 acres affected during construction and replanted with grass or other vegetation after construction. These soils have been previously disturbed for agricultural use of the property and development of Aubell Lane. The selected action will have negligible long-term beneficial effect on geological resources and soils at Requa and a negligible long-term reduction in the geological hazards related to slope stability. The project will have a negligible long-term adverse effect on soils at the Midway site from locating a building on the site, and a negligible long-term effect on geological resources and geological hazards.

Cumulative Effects on Geology, Geological Hazards, and Soils—It is a reasonable assumption that residential, commercial or agricultural development or use in the Requa and Aubell areas outside the parks will affect geological resources and soils over the long-term but it is not possible to anticipate all these uses at this time and therefore, not possible to determine the type or intensity of the effect. Although long-term effects on soils are more likely to be minor to moderate than negligible or major, geological hazards and the major seismic threat inherent along the steep coastline of northwestern California will continue to exist and will be mitigated by whatever means or technology is appropriate at the time of development.

Effects on Hydrology and Water Quality—The selected action includes removal of the Requa sewage treatment plant that currently does not meet state water quality standards for discharge into ocean waters. Removal of the plant will have a long-term beneficial effect to water quality that is judged to be negligible to minor because the existing plant is located about 800 vertical feet above the ocean and discharges into a leach field but not directly into the ocean or any other body of water. Because the discharge occurs in an area with no human use, it does not affect human health or create a nuisance or cause objectionable esthetic effects. There will be no direct short-term effects on hydrology or water quality from the demolition and restoration at Requa, or long-term effects on hydrology or water quality following revegetation, because the Requa site is located approximately 800 feet above the Klamath River and the ocean, and is separated from stream channels on the east by buffers of thick vegetation. Indirect effects on water quality in the Klamath River and the Pacific Ocean from erosion of disturbed soils following demolition and grading prior to revegetation will be negligible, short-term, and adverse.

Water quality in the Elk Creek tributary at the Midway site will be protected during construction through standard best management practices (BMPs) to avoid soil erosion at active construction sites and petrochemical or other contaminant spills. A construction stormwater pollution prevention plan and a spill prevention plan will be implemented to avoid adverse effects to water quality. The facility storm drain system is designed to minimize pollutant concentrations that can be delivered into the creek and to filter stormwater through grassy swales (shallow vegetated depressions) to minimize discharge into the creek. BMPs to avoid or reduce erosion to protect water quality and to minimize sediment delivery into streams will be used during culvert replacement, ground-disturbing activities, and maintenance operations. These BMPs are the same as used to protect the coho salmon and other fish in the stream and include waterbars, check

dams, silt screens, construction only during dry periods or when the soils are not saturated, no refueling of construction equipment within 150 feet of a stream, a fuel spill prevention plan for fueling and on-site equipment operations, and use of weed-free straw on exposed soils until revegetation is complete. Approximately 1100 gallons per day of wastewater will be generated from the new facility and will be treated with a septic tank and leach field designed to meet current state Regional Water Quality Control Board standards. Thus, the selected action will have negligible to minor short-term adverse effects on water quality from construction and similar effects in the long-term.

Cumulative Effects on Water Quality—The US Army Corps of Engineers is planning and overseeing clean-up of hazardous materials associated with the former military use of the Requa facility as the Klamath Air Force Station from the 1950s through 1983 when the site was turned over to the NPS. The materials are located in isolated areas throughout the site and are not currently known to affect any ground water on site or nearby. Long-term adverse effects on water quality from erosion due to landsliding at the Requa site have not been observed to have any effect on the Klamath River, its tributaries, or the Pacific Ocean. Erosion from the Requa site following heavy rains is negligible in comparison to adverse effects on water quality in the river from upstream land uses and significant chronic adverse effects on water quality from upstream dams, water diversions, agricultural, and industrial uses.

Cumulative effects on water quality in the vicinity of Aubell Ranch are related to residential and agricultural uses. Major adverse effects on water quality in Elk Creek are prohibited under water quality regulations enforced by the County and the State. Water quality in Elk Creek is expected to be maintained at a high level suitable to protect coho salmon that inhabit the creek. Agricultural uses in the vicinity are dominated by livestock grazing that does not require pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

Effects on Floodplains and Wetlands—No floodplains or wetlands will be affected by any work at the Requa facility which is located at the top of the coastal bluff approximately 800 feet above the Klamath River and the Pacific Ocean.

There is not a well-developed floodplain along the Elk Creek tributary at Aubell Ranch because the stream is intermittent and drains a small watershed. There will be no adverse effects to the floodplain of the Elk Creek tributary from construction but there will be a moderate long-term benefit from replacing the undersized metal pipe culvert beneath Aubell Lane with a concrete bottomless arch culvert that is sized to accommodate a 100-year storm event.

Wetlands at the Midway site are riparian areas associated with the Elk Creek tributary. These riparian wetlands have been affected by channelization of the stream, construction of Aubell Lane across the stream and channelization through the pipe culvert, and conversion of the original landforms, vegetation, and drainage patterns to agricultural pastures used for livestock grazing. The primary wetland functions and values associated with the stream are fish and wildlife habitat in the stream and riparian zone, and flood attenuation. Short-term adverse effects on riparian wetlands associated with removal of the existing culvert beneath Aubell Lane, construction of an arch culvert, and runoff from construction activities will be avoided or minimized through implementation of a stormwater pollution prevention plan and BMPs described above under water quality. Approximately 120 linear feet of riparian zone along the stream will be affected by road widening and culvert installation, of which about 60 linear feet is already affected by the existing road and culvert. The selected action will have a minor to moderate long-term benefit to riparian wetlands from installation of an arch culvert across the stream that will accommodate 100-year stream flows. The overall effects on riparian wetlands from the selected action at

Aubell will be negligible to minor, short-term, and adverse from disturbance to the streambanks and removal of vegetation during construction, and minor to moderate, long-term, and beneficial from installation of an arch culvert that will restore the channel morphology and flow regime.

Effects on Vegetation—At Requa, there will be a long-term benefit from removal of non-native plants and restoration of four acres with native vegetation. Several alder and Sitka spruce trees will be removed but these trees have grown on fillslopes since the original clearing for construction of the military facility about 50 years ago and are common in the vicinity and throughout the region. The removal of mature trees will be a negligible adverse effect that will persist until new trees reestablish from seeds from adjacent areas. The restoration of four acres of native vegetation will have a negligible but beneficial long-term effect.

The selected action to construct a new facility on the Midway site at Aubell will have a long-term minor adverse effects from removal of about 12 acres of vegetation to construct buildings, parking, and vehicle access areas at the Midway site and for widening and safety improvements at the intersection of Elk Valley Road and Aubell Lane, but the overall effect on park resources will be negligible because the vegetation that will be removed is primarily non-native pasture grasses and trees that are common in the vicinity and the region. The vegetation that will be affected for improvements to the Elk Valley Road/Aubell Lane intersection is routinely disturbed for road maintenance. There will be long-term benefit from landscaping with native plants but the effect will be negligible to minor because of the small area. There will be a short-term negligible adverse effect on the strip of riparian vegetation along stream from removal for culvert replacement but riparian vegetation will recolonize the streambank.

Cumulative Effects on Vegetation—Cumulative effects on vegetation in the parks and the surrounding region are related to logging and associated road construction, and residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and transportation development and use. The most significant cumulative effect on vegetation in RNSP occurred prior to park establishment and expansion from the logging of 50,000 acres of original coniferous forest, mostly in the Redwood Creek watershed with additional logging in the Howland Hill area near Aubell Ranch. Park projects that remove vegetation include watershed restoration, maintenance of roads and trails, and restoration of the Bald Hills grasslands and oak woodlands through removal of encroaching Douglas-fir. NPS and CDPR have implemented a program to protect Port-Orford-cedar from a root disease that is affecting this economically and ecologically valuable species along the Smith River and in the Little Bald Hills area of the parks. Sudden Oak Death, caused by a pathogen closely related to the root disease agent, is also expected to adversely affect park vegetation but the degree of effect is not yet known.

Effects on Wildlife—Demolition and restoration at Requa will have adverse effects on wildlife from noise and disturbance but the effect will be negligible because wildlife species that are present have been affected by the high degree of disturbance that has occurred on site since construction in the 1950s and subsequent military and park maintenance operations. The selected action at Requa will have negligible to minor benefits to wildlife from cessation of daily activity associated with maintenance operations and from restoration to more natural conditions of four acres currently occupied by buildings and roads.

At the Midway site at Aubell Ranch, the overall effect on wildlife populations will be negligible in the short-term, adverse to some species, and beneficial to others depending on the species' tolerance of humans. Long-term effects from loss of about 4.6 acres of vegetation that will be covered with buildings, roads, and parking areas, and an increase in disturbance and human activity will be adverse, but the effects will be negligible to minor because the site is adjacent to

undisturbed areas of the park which will serve as refuge from human activities that occur in the Elk Valley Road corridor. About 3.4 acres will be affected for construction, but will be revegetated with grass following construction. The grassy areas will be used by deer and elk for grazing. Based on the behavior of deer and elk in other areas of the parks such as Davison Ranch, Elk Prairie, and Gold Bluffs Beach, and other developments along the US Highway 101 corridor such as the Stone Lagoon RV park south of Orick in Humboldt County, the elk and deer will continue to use areas where there is human activity provided there is sufficient forage, shelter, and undisturbed calving areas available nearby.

Cumulative Effects on Wildlife— Cumulative adverse effects on wildlife in the parks relate primarily to activities outside the parks including mortality from vehicle collisions along Elk Valley Road and major highways; loss or conversion of habitat for agricultural residential, commercial, and transportation development; and illegal poaching of elk and deer. These effects are negligible to significant, depending on the species and its degree of mobility and tolerance of human presence and disturbance. Some wildlife species benefit in the short-term from the presence of humans who leave trash that serves as a food source, and from disturbance due to logging, which increases forage for some species. However, in the long-term, human food sources have a moderate to significant adverse effect on wildlife that become accustomed to unhealthy food sources or are killed if they become nuisances or cross highways trying to get to food sources. Other park actions that affect wildlife include watershed restoration, second growth forest management, control of non-native plants, and maintenance of facilities. The cumulative effects on wildlife from park actions in the short-term will be adverse, localized, and negligible. Park resource management projects have long-term minor to moderate benefits from restoration of habitat. The cumulative effects on wildlife from all human activity in the Elk Valley Road corridor and the vicinity will be adverse and will increase from minor to moderate as habitat is lost to development, and the human population and associated disturbance increase.

Effects on Rare, Sensitive, Threatened, and Endangered Species—No federally or state listed, proposed or candidate, rare, threatened or endangered plants or animals will be adversely affected by restoration at the Requa site under the selected action. Restoration of four acres at Requa with native vegetation will have negligible long-term indirect benefits to sensitive animal species from the slight increase in available habitat and the reduction of human use, and no effect on sensitive plant species.

As described in the Endangered Species Consultation section, Biological Opinion 151422SWR2003AR8948:BAD, dated October 27, 2005, documented the NMFS' determination that the activities in the selected action at Aubell are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened SONCC coho salmon or result in the destruction or adverse modification of SONCC coho salmon critical habitat. The selected action at Aubell will not affect any other federally or state listed, proposed or candidate, rare, threatened or endangered plants or animals. Individual northern red-legged frogs might be displaced during construction at the Midway site and there might be long-term effects on individual frogs from mortality from vehicles on Aubell Lane during rainy periods when the frogs move but these effects are negligible for the population of red legged frogs in the vicinity. Sensitive species associated with the riparian area and the stream will be protected by implementation of the best management practices and the mitigation measures described under the terms and conditions listed in the biological opinion for the coho salmon and its critical habitat. Additional surveys for sensitive bird species (northern spotted owl, marbled murrelets, and bald eagles) will be conducted immediately prior to construction but none of these species are expected to be occupying areas that will be affected by construction.

Cumulative Effects on Rare, Sensitive, Threatened, and Endangered Species — Almost all activities in RNSP affect sensitive species because the forests and streams in the parks are occupied by sensitive bird species and anadromous fish (coho and chinook salmon, steelhead trout) that are federally listed as threatened. On-going and planned projects and activities for which the NPS consults with either USFWS or NOAA Fisheries for potential effects on listed, proposed, and candidate species include watershed restoration; road, trail and facility maintenance and construction; non-native plant management; helicopter and off-road vehicle use; and beach management. The NPS has been authorized incidental take of listed species, primarily northern spotted owls, marbled murrelets, and anadromous salmonids, by the USFWS and/or NOAA Fisheries for some of these activities. On-going NPS actions do not jeopardize the continued survival of any listed or proposed threatened or endangered species. Fire management through out the parks will have minor long-term benefits to sensitive species from reduction in fuel levels that reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfires. Management of second growth forests in RNSP will have minor to moderate benefits as forests regain characteristics more typical of old growth forest and the habitat for forest-dwelling bird species improves.

Construction and operation of the proposed Elk Valley Rancheria casino and resort at the Martin Ranch at the intersection of Highway 101 and Humboldt Road has the potential to affect habitat for the western lily, a federally listed endangered plant, due to run-off into the marshes downslope, and northern spotted owls that might occupy the second growth forests in the parks on the southeastern edge of the casino development. Any potential effects to federally listed species will be mitigated as described in the August 2005 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Elk Valley Rancheria Martin Ranch Fee-to-Trust Project.

Outside the parks, the primary activities that affect sensitive or listed threatened and endangered species are loss of habitat from logging, residential, industrial, and agricultural development; dams for power development, flood control, and water supply for domestic and agricultural activities; and residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and recreational development projects that reduce the quality of habitat or decrease the quantity of habitat. For anadromous fish, sport and commercial fishing also affect fish populations over both the short- and long-term. The cumulative effects on some species and their habitat are widespread, adverse, long-term, and significant, and have resulted in the listing of these species as threatened.

Effects on Cultural Resources—No historic resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places will be adversely affected by the selected action either during demolition and restoration at the Requa site or by ground disturbance for construction at the Midway site at Aubell Ranch.

Cumulative Effects on Cultural Resources—Other on-going and proposed activities in the parks include fire management, watershed restoration, management of second growth forests and non-native plants, and maintenance and construction of trails and other facilities. The cultural sensitivity of the coniferous forest where watershed restoration and second growth forest management will occur is very low because these areas were logged or affected by road construction, which very likely damaged or destroyed any cultural resources originally present. Invasive non-native plants occur primarily in areas affected by recent human disturbance. Cultural resources in these areas are protected by avoiding or minimizing ground disturbance.

The most sensitive cultural areas in the parks are the mouth of the Klamath River and the river corridor, the area between the community of Hiouchi and the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park campground, all other stream corridors, and the Bald Hills. The Bald Hills in Humboldt County contain the greatest concentration of archeological and historic resources in RNSP.

Recent archeological investigations in Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park along the Smith River near Hiouchi indicate that the area possesses significant cultural resources that have been adversely affected by residential, commercial, and park developments. Historic structures throughout the park are protected from wildfire with firelines constructed by hand immediately adjacent to the structures. Highway and road development has affected cultural resources at Boyes Prairie (also called Elk Prairie) in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park and the original Kelsey Trail in the Little Bald Hills. Cultural resource surveys are conducted prior to any work involving ground disturbance. The NPS consults with affiliated American Indian groups and/or the SHPO/YTHPO as required under the 1995 PA on all projects that have the potential to affect cultural resources.

Effects on Visitor Experience and Visual Quality—There are no visitor facilities at the Requa maintenance area that will be affected by the selected action. Visitor access to the Klamath River overlook and the Coastal Trail off Requa Road will not be affected by demolition and restoration at the existing maintenance facility. Views of the Requa facility looking north across the mouth of the Klamath River from along the Coastal Drive will not be affected by the demolition and restoration. The primary view of the river mouth and ocean from the overlook faces the opposite direction of the maintenance facility and the topography blocks views of the facility from the Coastal Trail located downslope. Removal of roads, buildings down to their foundations, and some drainage structures at the existing maintenance facility and restoration of four acres with native vegetation will have a short-term adverse effect during the demolition and prior to the revegetation and a long-term beneficial effect on visual quality but both the adverse and beneficial effects will be negligible because the two communication towers will remain on site and the access road will pass by private residences and by another communication tower on private land outside the park boundary. The effect on visitor experience and visual quality from the selected action at Requa will be negligible.

There are no formal visitor facilities at Aubell Ranch and therefore, there will be no effect on visitor experience in the Aubell area from the selected action. Visitors will be allowed to park at the new maintenance facility but the benefit to visitors will be negligible because the maintenance facility will not enhance recreational opportunities.

Visual quality at the Midway site at Aubell Ranch will be adversely affected in the short term by construction equipment and materials. The new facility has been designed to blend with the surrounding rural agricultural and residential character, will be landscaped, and will have minimal lighting that will be shielded to reduce glare and adverse effects on night skies. The effect on visitor experience and visual quality from the selected action at Aubell Ranch will be a negligible long-term adverse effect because access to Aubell Ranch passes through residential and commercial areas rather than through undeveloped parklands.

Cumulative Effects on Visitor Experience and Visual Quality—The NPS and CDPR are proposing to construct a hiking trailhead and a trail at Aubell Ranch at the former residence currently used for administrative offices, east of the Midway site and closer to the edge of the old growth forest in Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. Other opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, equestrian use, and primitive camping are also being proposed as part of a comprehensive trail plan for RNSP. Other recreational opportunities in the vicinity include sport fishing in the Smith and Klamath Rivers and the ocean; sea kayaking and surfing along the Del Norte County coast; whitewater boating on the Smith River; the Smith River Rancheria casino on Highway 101 north of Crescent City; the Elk Valley Rancheria Casino on Howland Hill Road and the proposed casino and resort along Highway 101 south of Crescent City; camping and hiking in RNSP, Six Rivers National Forest, and the Smith River National Recreation Area (NRA); scenery and

wildlife viewing and photography in RNSP, Tolowa Dunes State Park, the national forest, the NRA, and Pelican Bay State Beach and other beaches in Del Norte County; and many additional recreational activities available in Crescent City, Del Norte County, and southern Oregon.

Effects on Adjacent Communities—Under the selected action, the NPS will discontinue its operations at Requa, including operation of a well that is the water source for five private residences. The NPS will continue to work with the affected residents to offer them the opportunity to purchase and operate the system as a private system. The effect of the selected action on the potable water supply for the five private residences at Requa will be adverse and long-term, and could be a significant short-term economic effect depending the cost of purchasing and operating the water system. The overall effect on the community of Requa is a moderate long-term benefit from a decrease in traffic on Requa Road from park vehicles, equipment, and deliveries. The effect on the community of Klamath from relocating the NPS maintenance area from Requa to the Aubell area is a minor adverse effect from fewer purchases of gasoline and other items in convenience stores.

To reduce the effect on the rural character of the neighborhood along Elk Valley Road in the vicinity of Aubell Lane, the location of the new facility was changed from the site at the intersection of Elk Valley Road and Aubell Lane to the Midway site, which is farther from Elk Valley Road, is screened by trees, and is about 1,000 feet from the nearest residence. To further mitigate the presence of a maintenance facility in a rural residential area dominated by open agricultural fields, additional trees will be planted for screening; the grounds of the facility will be landscaped with native plants; the design, size and scale, and siding and roof materials of the new facility will blend in with existing structures in the area; and lighting will be minimized and shielded to reduce glare. To mitigate increased traffic using the facility, Elk Valley Road will be widened and turn lanes added at the intersection with Aubell Lane, which will be paved to reduce dust. The new facility will be used primarily between 6:45 am and 5:45 pm Monday through Thursday and will not be a source of noise outside these times. A pedestrian path leading to the forest to the east will be added along Aubell Lane as part of the widening to two lanes.

The California Department of Transportation determined that the increase in daily vehicle traffic from the facility will not have significant effects on Elk Valley Road. Construction equipment used at Aubell will not penetrate into the airspace of the private heliport near the project site.

The overall effect of the selected action to construct the maintenance facility on the Midway site at Aubell Ranch will be primarily from increased noise and traffic delays during alterations to the Elk Valley Road/Aubell Lane intersection and during construction, with minor effects on drivers who travel on Elk Valley Road and moderate effects on neighbors and residents who use Elk Valley Road more frequently. The long-term effect on the immediate neighbors will be moderately adverse from the presence of a large maintenance operation in a formerly rural residential and agricultural area. The long-term effect on the Crescent City community in general will be a minor benefit from increased purchases of gasoline and other items in local stores.

Cumulative Impacts on Adjacent Communities—It is not possible to describe all the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that have affected or might affect neighbors adjacent to the parks at Requa, along Elk Valley Road, or in Crescent City and the Del Norte County region. The Del Norte County General Plan describes proposed changes to the County but all changes are subject to approval by the County, to County ordinances and State regulations, and to economic considerations. The Elk Valley Rancheria is proposing to construct a casino and resort hotel at the intersection of US Highway 101 and Humboldt Road that is intended to attract visitors and encourage longer stays in the area. Several projects are proposed or underway in the Crescent

City area that are intended to accommodate population growth or to meet current environmental regulations, including a wastewater treatment plant and a solid waste management transfer station.

Conclusion—As summarized above, the effects of the selected action have been considered and determined to be less than significant. These effects have also been considered under the criteria for significance listed in the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1508.27) and found to be less than significant. Actions for which mitigation can be prescribed, the prescribed mitigation, and the responsible party are summarized in the following table.

Summary of Effects and Mitigation for Redwood Maintenance Facility Relocation

<i>Resource & Effect</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>
Air Quality: short term adverse effects from construction dust, vehicle emissions	Water trucks for dust abatement; vehicle emissions regulated to state standards	Contractor—dust control & vehicle maintenance; NPS, CDPR—park vehicle maintenance
Soils, Geological Resources, & Geological Hazards: 4 acres disturbed by restoration at Requa; 8 acres & 10,000 cubic yards affected by grading & facility footprint at Aubell; no geological hazards at Aubell; NPS operations no longer affected by landsliding at Requa	4 acres of soils at Requa previously disturbed by original construction will be regraded to resemble original contours except for building foundations & replanted with native vegetation; 4.6 acres soils at Aubell affected by removal of original vegetation will be covered with impervious surfaces & 3.4 additional acres will be replanted following construction	Contractor—regrading & replanting
Hydrology & Water Quality: short-term minor erosion of bare soils into streams during construction; long-term runoff from parking lots; Requa wastewater treatment plant operating under temporary permit	Facility set back 125 feet from stream; BMPs to protect fish-bearing streams will avoid or minimize run-off into stream during & after construction of 2-lane road with arch culvert; Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) required; Aubell stormwater (grassy swales) & wastewater disposal (septic, leach field) designed & operated to current standards; outmoded plant will be removed & no wastewater will be generated at Requa following relocation	Contractor—construction SWPPP, BMPs implemented during construction; NPS, CDPR—long-term operation SWPPP, operate facility under BMPs
Floodplains & Wetlands: no effect at Requa; 60 linear riparian vegetation removed to widen Aubell Lane to 2 lanes; short-term disturbance to widen road & construct arch culvert; long-term effects on riparian wetlands from stormwater runoff	Adverse effects to 60 linear feet of riparian wetlands from removal of vegetation & bank disturbance along reach of stream where Aubell Lane will be widened, removal of old culvert & installation of new culvert; long-term minor to moderate benefit to floodplain & riparian wetlands from larger culvert that will restore hydrological regime to more closely resemble original hydrology; SWPPP to avoid or minimize adverse effects from runoff	Contractor—implement SWPPP during road widening & for culvert & facility construction; NPS—implement SWPPP for facility operation & maintain arch culvert for proper operation
Vegetation: vegetation at	Revegetate 4 acres at Requa with native	Contractor—Aubell landscaping &

<i>Resource & Effect</i>	<i>Mitigation</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>
both Requa & Aubell primarily non-native horticultural species or livestock pasture; Sitka spruce, red alder removed at Requa	species; Sitka spruce, red alder have grown on fill slopes since original construction; alder, Sitka spruce expected to reestablish from nearby seed sources; 3.4 acres at Aubell landscaped or replanted with native plants after construction of roads, utilities, & drainage	replantings; NPS–Requa revegetation
Wildlife: Requa & Aubell subject to on-going disturbance from human activity; less disturbance at Requa following restoration; increased disturbance at Aubell during construction & facility operation	Long-term benefit to wildlife at Requa following relocation of operations & restoration of 4 acres of native vegetation; long-term minor increase in disturbance at Aubell from increased human presence (12 hours daily, 4 days a week).	No mitigation prescribed for disturbance to species tolerant of on-going human disturbance at both Requa, Aubell; NPS–install wildlife-resistant trash containers at Aubell facility to reduce habituating wildlife to human food sources
Sensitive Species: no sensitive plants at either Requa or Aubell; no sensitive animals at Requa; coho salmon, coastal cutthroat trout in Aubell stream	BMPs required during construction to protect fish from erosion into stream; long-term benefit from arch culvert with capacity for 100-year flow event; stormwater & wastewater treatment systems to protect water quality during construction & operation	NPS–monitor BMPs to be implemented by contractor during construction; NPS, CDPR–implement BMPs for facility operation at Aubell
Cultural Resources: no National Register-eligible resources affected	All ground-disturbing activities monitored; work will cease & the NPS will consult with the SHPO, Yurok Tribe, &/or the Elk Valley Rancheria, as required under the 1995 PA if resources encountered	NPS–monitor in consultation with Yurok Tribe &/or Elk Valley Rancheria
Visitor Experience: no visitor facilities at either Requa or Aubell	No direct effect on visitors at either Requa or Aubell because there are currently no existing visitor facilities; road improvements at intersection of Elk Valley Road & Aubell Lane will improve traffic safety for planned trailhead at Aubell	NPS, CDPR–construct trail facilities proposed for Aubell
Adjacent Communities: negligible adverse effect on Klamath businesses & corresponding positive effect on Crescent City businesses from employee gasoline & food purchases; increased traffic on Elk Valley Road; noise & traffic delays during Aubell construction	Short-term adverse effects on traffic during improvements to intersection of Elk Valley Road & Aubell Lane & from noise during construction; traffic increase estimated at 75 vehicles per day determined not significant by Caltrans but mitigated by addition of left turn lanes; change in neighborhood character from facility construction mitigated by selection of Midway site, vegetation screening & landscaping, & building design to resemble local architecture	Contractor–implement traffic safety controls during road work; NPS–structures designed to match local architectural character

Non-Impairment of Park Resources and Values

Non-Impairment of Air Quality—Air quality will be affected primarily by dust from ground disturbance during construction and vehicle emissions. Dust will be controlled by sprinkling water. Vehicle emissions must comply with state and federal emission standards. Air quality in

the parks will return to good to excellent condition after ground disturbance ceases to generate dust. The long-term effect of vehicle emissions associated with maintenance operations and increased traffic along Elk Valley Road is negligible. Therefore, the selected action will not impair air quality or air quality related values in the parks.

Non-Impairment of Soils or Geological Resources—No geological resources will be affected by the selected action. Approximately four acres of soils at Requa will be affected by demolition of roads and drainage structures. These soils were previously disturbed for the original construction and the majority of project-related ground disturbance at Requa will be from the removal of asphalt, concrete, and other impervious materials from previous construction. Approximately 10,000 cubic yards of soils will be graded at the Midway site over an area of about eight acres, 3.6 acres of which will be replanted with grass following construction. Some of these soils have been previously affected by construction of Aubell Lane. The selected action will not alter geological hazards from landsliding at Requa but will reduce exposure of employees who drive to Requa along the landslide-prone section of Highway 101 between Crescent City and Requa. There are no known geological hazards at Aubell Ranch. Therefore, the selected action will not impair soils or geological resources in the parks nor increase geological hazards that might cause impairment to park resources.

Non-Impairment of Hydrology and Water Quality—Water quality at Requa will not be directly affected by the selected action. However, the old sewage treatment plant will be removed, which will have negligible indirect benefits to the water quality in the ocean 800 feet downhill of the plant. Water quality and hydrology of the unnamed tributary of Elk Creek at the Midway site at Aubell Ranch will be protected through siting the new facility 125 feet from the stream, through best management practices described in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan and applied both to construction and to operation of the new facility, through construction of a stormwater filtration system for the facility, and through best management practices to protect the coho salmon prescribed under the Terms and Conditions of the NMFS Biological Opinion. In addition, the existing culvert beneath Aubell Lane will be replaced with a larger concrete bottomless arch culvert designed to accommodate 100-year flow events, which will improve stream functioning. Therefore, the selected action will not impair hydrology or water quality.

Non-Impairment of Floodplains and Riparian Wetlands—The unnamed tributary of Elk Creek does not have a well-developed floodplain because of its size and position in the drainage. However, replacement of the existing metal pipe culvert beneath Aubell Lane with a larger concrete bottomless arch culvert designed to accommodate 100-year flow events will benefit the floodplain by accommodating greater flows. The riparian wetlands along the stream will be adversely affected during removal of the old culvert, widening of the road, and construction of the new culvert. However, the new culvert will improve the hydrological functioning of the stream which will benefit the riparian zone. Therefore, the selected action will not impair floodplains or wetlands.

Non-Impairment of Vegetation Resources—The vegetation at the Requa maintenance consists primarily of non-native plants that are invasive or have been imported for landscaping. The majority of ground disturbance that will occur at Requa will be due to removal of asphalt, concrete, and other impervious surfaces, so that very little undisturbed native vegetation will be removed. Some mature alder and Sitka spruce trees will be removed but most of these trees have grown on fillslopes since the 1950s after construction of the Klamath Air Force Station. These trees are common at the site, in the vicinity, and in the region. Four acres of disturbed soils will be replanted with native plants.

About eight acres of vegetation will be affected at Aubell Ranch for improvements to the intersection of Elk Valley Road and Aubell Lane. This vegetation is primarily non-native pasture grasses. Following construction, 3.6 acres will be replanted, mostly with grass but some native plants will be used for landscaping and restoration. Therefore, the selected action will not impair park plant communities or vegetation.

Non-Impairment of Wildlife Resources—Those wildlife species that occur at the existing Requa maintenance facility are common in the region and are tolerant of human presence. Removal of facilities and cessation of park operations at the facility will benefit wildlife by decreasing human disturbance, removing a source of human food, and restoring four acres of an area covered with asphalt and concrete with native vegetation that will serve as habitat.

At the Aubell area, wildlife will be disturbed during construction and by human activity during work hours for approximately twelve hours a day for four days a week. The wildlife occupying the area is tolerant of humans because of residential, commercial, and agricultural uses and vehicle traffic on Elk Valley Road. There will continue to be open agricultural pastures on either side of the new maintenance facility and the only development planned for the park forests to the east is a hiking trail along the forest edge. Elk and deer will use the grassy areas that will be replanted on 3.6 acres after construction of the new facility. Therefore, the selected action will not impair wildlife resources.

Non-Impairment of Rare, Sensitive, Threatened, and Endangered Species—The USFWS has concurred with the NPS determination that no listed, proposed, or candidate threatened or endangered species, or their designated or proposed critical habitats, will be adversely affected by the selected action. NMFS issued Biological Opinion 151422SWR2003AR8948:BAD, dated October 27, 2005, that documented its determination that the project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened SONCC coho salmon or result in the destruction or adverse modification of SONCC coho salmon critical habitat, provided the mitigation measures prescribed in the Terms and Conditions of the Biological Opinion are implemented. Therefore, the selected action will not impair sensitive, threatened, or endangered plant or wildlife species.

Non-Impairment of Cultural Resources—There are no historic properties at either the Requa maintenance area or the Midway site at Aubell Ranch that will be affected by the selected action. Therefore, the selected action will not impair cultural resources.

Non-impairment of Visual Quality—The views of the Klamath River and the Pacific Ocean from the Klamath River Overlook will not be affected by demolition and restoration at the existing Requa maintenance facility, nor is the facility visible from the Coastal Trail. Visual quality at Aubell Ranch along Elk Valley Road will not be affected by the selected action because the new facility will be located away from Elk Valley Road and will be designed to complement the vernacular architecture and local colors and textures. Visual quality at Aubell Ranch is associated primarily with the old growth forest to the east. The new structure will be screened with vegetation and landscaped and will not detract from the views of forest from along Elk Valley Road. The view from Elk Valley Road includes private residences and agricultural and industrial operations. Therefore, the selected action will not impair visual quality in the parks.

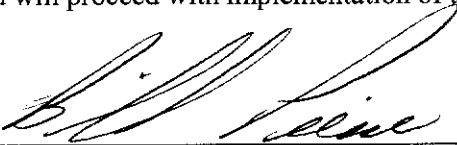
Basis for Decision

Based on the environmental assessment, analyses of issues and alternatives, together with consideration of public interest and the relation between public interest and laws, statutes, and regulations for managing NPS units, the ability of the mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts, and the concurrence of agencies and affiliated American Indian tribes that were

consulted, the NPS is selecting to implement as its selected action the action described in the *Redwood Maintenance Facility Relocation Environmental Assessment and Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, Redwood National and State Parks, California*, dated December 2004, as Alternative 2: Requa Restoration (Preferred Project) and Alternative 3: Midway Site.

It is the determination of the National Park Service that the selected action in Redwood National and State Parks for construction of a new joint national and state park maintenance facility at the Midway site at Aubell Ranch (Alternative 3, environmentally preferred alternative) followed by demolition of the existing maintenance facility at Requa and restoration of the site (Alternative 2, environmentally preferred alternative) does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, nor is this project without precedent or similar to ones that normally require an environmental impact statement. Therefore, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Park Service will not prepare an environmental impact statement, and will proceed with implementation of the program as soon as practicable.

Recommended: _____

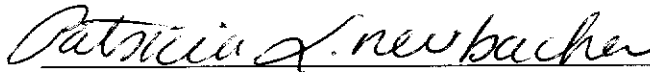


12-15-05

Bill Pierce
Superintendent
Redwood National Park

Date

Approved: _____



12/23/05

Jonathan B. Jarvis
Regional Director
Pacific-West Region

Date